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STATE PASS TO AID

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR JO](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON IRAQ

Summary

-- Lead story in all papers today, March 12, focuses on remarks of Defense Secretary Rumsfeld regarding the participation of UK forces in a war with Iraq. Papers characterized the flap over the comments as "confusion" within the alliance.

Editorial Commentary

-- "What happened to America?"

Daily columnist Fahd Fanek writes on the back page of semi-official influential Arabic Al-Rai (03/12): "Many analysts have not yet determined who is more dangerous to world peace and stability: Osama bin Laden or George Bush. Some believe that both these men are two sides of the same coin and that both of them believe bloodshed and violence to be solutions for problems. The only difference between them is that one has more destruction and more dangerous means than the other when it comes to eliminating innocent civilians. It is astonishing that a democratic country like America and a just and good people like the Americans would sink so low and that America's image would become so ugly as to suggest a force that lacks righteousness, justice and lawfulness and that dismisses world public opinion and that undertakes adventures that could lead to the worst of consequences."

-- "The current international order at the crossroads"

Columnist Salameh Ukour writes on the op-ed page of semi-official, influential Arabic daily Al-Rai (03/12): "We can understand why France, Germany, Russia, China and some other industrial countries rejected the option to join a U.S.-led war against Iraq. These countries want to protect the current international order, its political, legal and security establishments, its values and moral principles, and its preservation of peace and stability in the world. The Bush administration wants to replace the current international order with a new order where all the countries of the world and people are subject to the most powerful country or empire, which is, of course, the American empire.. What else could the destructive American-British war against Baghdad and Iraqi cities mean other than the killing of the Iraqi people, the destruction of its civilian, economic and social establishments, and taking this country back to the Middle Ages? Is this the democracy, freedom and human rights that the United States has always called for?"

-- "death is more dignifying"

Daily columnist Musa Hawamdeh writes on the op-ed page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (03/12): "Yes, we stand against the war and against the madness of Bush and his administration, that has yet to provide one bit of evidence that justifies its aggression against the Arab world.. We are not defending regimes and we are not taking sides, but the idea of an American occupation is too much.. As for those who believe America's arguments about Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction and that America wants to save the Iraqi people, then let him look at the West where there are more nuclear weapons than anywhere else, and then look at Israel, the proof that America cares nothing for the freedom of Arabs or their lives for that matter."

-- "The morals of 'Old Europe'"

Daily columnist Bater Wardam writes on the op-ed page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour

(03/12): "The European stand, led by France, Germany and Russia, against the American-British hegemony stems from the maturity and nobleness of European political and social thinking. Old Europe, as the U.S. Secretary of Defense calls it, learned lessons from the past, and, after having paid a huge price in the Second World War, both France and Germany realized that war and violence cannot achieve peace, and that peace can only be realized with political, economic and social development, by achieving social well-being, by ending military expansion, and by eliminating colonialism. This advanced political thinking is looked down upon by the U.S. administration. For instance, the United States says that France does not want to bear its 'international responsibility', as if this international responsibility, in the eyes of the oil and military manufacturing gang in the White House, is simply calling for war and launching war on weak countries that have strategic locations and resources."

GNEHM